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"It is impossible for any reflecting man not to entertain very serious apprehensions as to the effects, "which may result from the deliberations of these armed bodies. Each has its standing committee, "and, upon extraordinary occasions, the whole corps is assembled for the purpose of debating. Let "any man calculate, if he can, the danger which may arise from there being in the country four-"teen or fifteen hundred armed Parliaments. From the discussion of one subject, they will proceed to "the discussion of another; till, in the end, the Parliament at Westminster will not dare to act "without the consent of the Volunteer Parliaments scattered all over the country. A fearful state "of things is approaching, unless the Government instantly resolves to disband every corps, which "is under the rule of a Committee, and the members of which shall ever, on any occasion, assem-"ble for the purpose of debating, on any subject whatever."——Political Register, September 10, 1803. Vol. IV. p. 383.

VOLUNTEER SYSTEM.

That there is a necessity for some revision of the Volunteer System is now denied by no one, who has turned his attention to the subject, and who is not hostile, or totally indifferent, to the welfare of his country. The nature and degree of the changes to be made must depend upon the impressions, which experience shall have produced on the minds of the Parliament and of his Majesty's ministers; but, in the mean time, it is by no means improper, and may not be altogether useless, for me to suggest such measures as appear to me to be necessary to prevent the volunteer corps, who have been embodied and armed for the defence of their country, from further impeding, certainly against their will, the military service of that country, and from being eventually the innocent cause of subverting the throne of their Sovereign, and with it, their own liberties and those of their children.

Numerous are the causes, which will always so operate as to render the volunteers unfit to perform the duties of soldiers; but, it is not on the *defects* but on the *dangers* of the system, that I now propose to offer a few observations to the public. Of these dangers, which are by no means few in number, those which seem to me to be of the greatest magnitude are such as have arisen, and will arise, from the *exemptions* to which volunteers are entitled, and from the holding of *committees* and *elections* in the corps.

In consequence of an interpretation of the law, assuredly contrary to the meaning of Parliament, which interpretation has, however, by a subsequent act, been fully sanctioned and confirmed, the volunteer corps are become an asylum from the hardships of the militia ballots as well as those of the army of reserve: so that, every member of a volunteer corps, by way of reward for performing about a hundred days exercise, for each of which days, be it remembered, he receives a soldier's pay, will obtain an exemption, for five years, from the ballots of the militia and the army of reserve. The impoverishment which these exemptions produce in the other three descriptions of force scarcely needs pointing out: it has been, and is, but too visible in the returns of all the regiments and battalions in the service, whether regulars, reserve, or militia.* But this is a point on which it is not my present purpose to dwell. What I particularly wish to call the public attention to, in this part of the subject, is, the discontent and consequent disaffection, which, at no very distant period, may arise, from the hardship, which begins already to be severely felt, of furnishing the ballots for the militia and the army of reserve out of the few persons, comparatively speaking, who are not now, by one cause or another, exempted from the operation of those ballots. The volunteer exemptions have so reduced the number of persons liable to be ballotted, that the burthen is become very heavy on those who remain liable, and, it cannot but be painful to reflect, that, such is the nature of the volunteer system, that it has thrown this burthen upon those persons, who are the least able to bear it. The moment it was discovered, that the volunteer corps had, in their constitution, the virtue of exempting

* The Surrey militia, first and second battalion together, ought to consist of 2,023 men, but it does even at this time, consist of no more than 1,030, leaving a deficiency of 993, or almost one-half! and this at the end of *nine months!* Of the army of reserve, England and Scotland were to furnish 40,000 men, and we know, by the returns laid before Parliament, that only 28,000 of them have been raised. And, as to the regular army, its recruiting service, except as far as it has been kept moving by the army of reserve, is absolutely at a stand, the whole, horse and foot, not having recruited nine thousand effective men in nine months of war and of preparation for war!

their members from the chance of being obliged to perform, or to pay for, a duty fifty times as great as that of serving as a volunteer, every one wished to become a volunteer. It was natural. No blame whatever attaches to the persons thus pursuing their interest and their ease. The fault lay in the system, and not in the motives of the persons who were acted upon by it, many of whom, it is, also, right to observe, were led into the corps by motives of public spirit only. Upon the back of this came another evil. Every man who was about to make one of a military association, naturally had some wish as to the sort of persons who were to be his associates. Hence a selection took place; and, as the first founders of corps were necessarily persons of property, the selection was, as might be expected, such as to exclude almost all those who were neither the relations, the friends, the servants, or the dependants in some way or other, of the founders of the corps; an exclusion which was likely to extend to, and which has extended to, nearly all the married journeymen, labourers, and cottagers in the kingdom, a description of persons, which, above all others, it is the duty of the government to protect and to cherish. Here, again, we have to blame the system, not the men. What is so natural as for a man to wish to have in the same corps with him, those whose company he best likes out of the corps? When he has a favour to confer, an exemption to bestow, what is so natural as for him to bestow it on those to whom he is attached by affection or by interest? On a son, for whom he would, otherwise, have to hire a substitute, or on a servant, whom, otherwise, he must lose, or to whom he must make a great advance of wages? But, however natural this partiality might be, and however excusable in the persons exercising it, no one will, I imagine, venture to say, that, as to its operation on many of the persons excluded from the corps, it was not, and is not, burthensome in the extreme. Why a self-created committee, or even a commander of a corps, should possess the power of admitting to exemptions, or of excluding from exemptions, and, consequently, of diminishing, or adding to, the burthens of whomsoever they please, I can see neither reason nor necessity; I can see, in the arbitrary exercise of such a power, nothing consonant to the spirit or the letter of the volunteer law, or of any other law of this country. If, indeed, the volunteers merely obtained a good for themselves, without causing harm to others, there might be less ground for complaint; but, as the case now stands, they not only exempt themselves from the operation of the ballots of the militia and of the army of reserve, but they throw their share of those burthens upon the poor and friendless part of the people, in addition to what those people already have to bear! This never was originally intended by either the Parliament or the ministers. It arose entirely out of the interpretation of the law officers of the crown; and, though it has now been sanctioned by an act, let us hope, that, in the revision of the system, means will be provided, if not to do away this source of calamity and discontent, at least, to put a stop to its further extention.

The rule of *exemption* gave rise to another, not less dangerous in the consequences which it is likely to produce. The law-officers of the crown, who seem, on this occasion, to have been considered as law-givers, having exempted the volunteers from the operation of the ballots, found out a counterpoise for it in another interpretation, to wit, that no volunteer could, after being duly enrolled, quit his corps, without the consent of his commanding officer. On what they founded either this or the before-mentioned interpretation, we are, as yet, quite uninformed; but, without being very minute in our inquiries as to this point, we may venture to assert, that, if the rule which they have laid down with respect to men not quitting their corps, be attempted to be adhered to, not only the corps but the courts of justice and the whole country will, before many months have passed over our heads, be thrown into confusion. The case of Mr. Dowley of the Surrey Volunteer Cavalry has been determined, by the magistrates at Union Hall, against the defendant, who quitted the corps, without the consent of his commanding officer, and whose fines on account of absence amounted to 5 l. 2 s. He refused to pay these fines; a distress was made upon his goods, which he refused to redeem, and which were, in consequence, sold by public auction; and, it is stated in the public prints, that the merits of the decision and seizure will be brought before the Court of King's Bench, in the shape of an action for an illegal restraint. Similar disputes exist, and similar actions are brewing in every part of the country. At the quarter sessions, held in and for the town of Colchester, on the 9th instant, a complaint was, it seems, preferred by a *Secretary* of a Volunteer Corps, against a Mr. Lloyd, a member of the said corps, on grounds similar to those of the complaint against Mr. Dowley, and the decision appears to have

been similar also, Mr. Lloyd expressing his resolution to bring the matter into the Court of King's Bench. The public prints state, that, as to the corps at Colchester, "very "serious disputes had, for some time, pre-"vailed amongst the members, accompanied "*with some acts of violence.* Much time "elapsed in the discussion of this business; "great *warmth* appeared occasionally on "both sides; and the court was, at one "time, most indecently and shamefully in-"terrupted by *a violent clapping and shout-"ing*, at some observations made by the "counsel for the defendant."* For modesty's sake, for decency's sake, let us no longer use the name of *volunteer!* Volunteers, who are kept in their corps by the *terrors of the law!* How will this fact sound in the ears of foreigners, whether friends or enemies? Will it create us alliances, and will it damp the hopes of our foe? Will it induce the world to believe, that we can make good the manly declaration which the Commander in Chief made to the London Volunteers at the Review, that "they would "enable their country to hurl back the "threats of the insolent enemy?" *Volunteers* held in the service of their country by the *terrors of the law!* yet, I blame not the *men*, but the system, which forces them forward in so ridiculous a light: it is not Bannister that we laugh at, but Scrub.

As if, however, there were not already quarrelling and litigation enough, Mr. Pitt calls for harder exercise, tighter rules, and a more summary mode of levying fines! What mode he will devise more summary than that of a legal distress of goods and chattels I know not, unless he should prevail upon Parliament to authorise the commanding officers of corps to levy in virtue of their own order instead of a warrant, and by the aid of a detachment of soldiers instead of the constable, or sheriff; that is to say, unless a foraging or marauding system should, in this respect, be made to supercede the law of the land; but, let me remind Mr. Pitt, that even foragers and marauders, though armed as well as heart could wish, would not be able to levy upon a man who should happen to have no goods or chattels to levy upon. Indeed, this circumstance must now, where it exists, always be a bar to punishment, and as it does very frequently exist, such a mode of punishment is unequal and unjust in its operation, and ought to be entirely abolished. How, then, will you keep the men in their corps? By their own good will, or not at all. Let them no longer be entitled to exemptions, and no longer be obliged to remain in their corps; let the terrors of the law induce them neither to enter nor to remain; then they will be worthy of the name of Volunteers, and there will always be two hundred thousand of them, at least, embodied, and fitter for service than they are now. If they cannot leave their corps, or absent themselves from its duties, without the permission of their commanding officer, they are *enlisted* to all intents and purposes, except as far as relates to punishment, which is inflicted upon their purse instead of upon their back.* They are enlisted, and, if they have any property, it may all be taken from them by distress, morsel by morsel, till they are in a situation to laugh at their officers and the magistrates too! Did the world ever before witness a system like this?

The *whole* of the persons, who are now in the volunteer corps, cannot remain there, without producing very great distress, not to say ruin, to a considerable portion of them. One half of the members of volunteer corps are small tradesmen, and other persons affected by such service, in the same manner as small tradesmen are. To such men absence from their business is sure to bring them into decay, and, with them, the first step of decay is not far from the last step of ruin. Their little ticklish affairs are kept up by unremitted exertion, and by such exertion alone. The least relaxation brings them down and reduces them to atoms. At first they did not feel the inconvenience and injury of this alienation from their business: they saw in the service nothing nearly so burthensome as the militia or army of reserve; the thing was new and fashionable; the national resentment against the enemy was in its youth and vigour; and, they entered the volunteer ranks under the combined influence of interest, novelty, and enthusiasm. When the two latter are completely worn away, and when the first is found to have been more than counterbalanced by losses and expenses arising from the service, can any man believe, that the parties will patiently remain in their corps? Will not distress upon distress of goods and

* I quote, here, the ministerial paper, the Morning Post, of the 11th instant.

* If the newspapers are to be believed they have, however, been very near to the backs of their *drum-boys!* These little fellows are, perhaps, really inlisted in the regular service, and, of course, are subject to martial law. But are the volunteer officers duly authorised to sit on courts martial, *without being themselves under martial law?* Never was there such a mass of incongruities and absurdities!

chattels take place, till the persons thus vexed and humiliated will become very numerous? And will not these persons communicate their discontents to others? And will not the consequence soon be discontent almost general, especially if, at the time to which I am looking forward, the whole weight of the war taxes, with an *arrear* of the income-tax, should come to the aid of the embarrassments arising from the volunteer service? I would seriously ask Mr. Pitt, whether he imagines, that, under circumstances like these which I here anticipate, persons will be *compelled* to remain and give their attendance in volunteer corps? If, at the end of three months, we find men generally tired of the service; if we find them, at the end of three delightful autumnal months, suffering their goods and chattels to be distrained; if we find them, in every quarter of the country, disputing and mutinying,

" —— Quarreling for a straw, or feather,
" And wondering how they came together;"

if we find them thus already, what are we to expect at the end of twelve or eighteen months? * People in easy circumstances may spare, for years together, a portion of their time for military exercise; but small tradesmen never can, without bringing ruin upon their families; and, this sort of ruin, when it comes to be pretty regularly, though thinly, spread over a country, is, in the work of revolution, the most powerful of all causes. Men in embarrassed circumstances, frequently seek for, and are always glad to meet with, a change in the government; to which, in such case, they never fail to impute their misfortunes. To a debtor, who has no prospect of relief, nothing short of a destruction of *the law* presents an effectual remedy; and, therefore, it is very unwise to suffer, if you can prevent it, the existence of any cause, which tends to the creating of such debtors; especially in a country where to be in debt is, according to the measure of the law, to be almost a criminal. So far, however, is Mr. Pitt from dreading any effect of this sort, that he wishes the volunteers, and the small tradesmen, of course, amongst the rest, to be kept out at drill three times as much as they are now! Out of three hundred and sixty-five days he wishes these people to be employed *sixty* days at military exercise! I have been accustomed to regard Mr. Pitt as a wise man; but when I think of this proposition; when I consider that it applies to 400,000 men in arms and not under martial law; when I view it in detail; when I pursue it through the miseries, the pains and penalties, of its execution, and the almost certain horrors of its consequences, I cannot but ask myself, is *this* the wisdom that will save my country?

Great, however, as are the dangers here pointed out, they shrink into nothingness at the appearance of those, which are to be apprehended from the mutinous, democratizing, and rebellious tendency of the *committees* and other deliberative bodies, appertaining to volunteer corps, and consisting of its members, or of other persons, having authority or influence in those corps. These committees certainly originated in no evil design: they naturally grew out of the system, which, instead of first providing commanding officers, and authorizing them to collect their corps, provided *no head at all*; but called upon the people to assemble, and to form and organize *themselves* into companies and battalions. They did so, and who can wonder at the wild work they made? Who can wonder, that, in the whole fifteen hundred volunteer corps, there are scarcely any two, which are governed by the same rules and regulations? Who can wonder at the establishment of committees and sub-committees, and who can wonder that these committees, after having chosen the officers of the corps, continue to possess and to exercise all the power, rendering the officers merely their agents? The government called upon the loyalty, the patriotism, and the zeal of the people; all these they found in abundance; but all these, without knowledge, without a wise and uniform system, were likely to produce, and they have produced, more harm than good. The people were told, that, by forming themselves into

* How general the non-attendance in the Surrey Volunteer Cavalry was, so soon as the 23d of September, will appear from the *circular* letter of CAPT. COLLINGDON, dated on that day:—"Sir," says he, "so little attention having been observed by many individuals of the troop to my letter of the 26th of Aug. and *no regard paid to the sacred pledge which you signed on the muster roll*, it is a duty, I owe not only to those gentlemen who have given me their constant attendance on the days appointed for drill and exercise; but also to his Majesty, who entrusted me with a commission to discipline the corps, to state in plain terms, that without constant attendance my endeavours will prove fruitless; and therefore any gentleman who does not attend one of the morning drills, and also Thursday in every week, for one month to come, will receive his dismissal." This was a *circular* addressed to every member of the corps; and, it may easily be imagined, that the Captain found himself with a very small troop, before he issued such a paper.

volunteer corps, they would be able to defend and to avenge their country. Forth they instantly started; and, finding no leaders, no head, nobody to direct them, no funds to defray any of the expenses of their association, they proceeded, as they had been accustomed to proceed in matters of trade and commerce, to select from the first groups that assemble, certain persons to devise and prepare such rules of conduct as were, in their opinion, best calculated to promote the objects in view. The rules, which were the result of the deliberations of the persons thus selected, were, of course, submitted to the consideration of all the parties that were to be affected thereby; and they were, of course, approved of, or not, according to the will of the majority. Hence arose, entirely for want of commanding officers ready appointed by government, the dangerous system of committees, which already threatens to extend its baneful influence over every species of public authority.

That the persons, who, at first composed, and who, at present, compose, the committees, are perfectly well affected to this our happy form of government, I entertain no doubt at all; but, I am by no means certain, that such persons will, six months hence, compose the committees; and, besides, who does not know, that men are changed by congregating together, and particularly when there is amongst them a contest for the possession of power? The constitution of Lord Chetwynd's corps, has not, perhaps, been generally adopted; for, as was before observed, scarcely any two corps are governed by the same rules; but, that something very much like it exists in almost every volunteer corps of infantry is too notorious to be disputed; and, that a system of government more republican and democratic never yet appeared in the world, will certainly not be denied, by any one who has considered the nature and tendency of its provisions. A system, from the highest to the lowest office, nay, from the colonel to the privates, completely *elective*; a system, where he who bears the name of commander, is governed by those who ought to obey him; where there are deliberations, discussions and votings, in sub-divisions, in grand divisions, and finally, in the whole society, or corps; a system, the connecting principles of which are, indeed, so much like those of the Corresponding Societies, that one can scarcely believe them not to have originated with some one, who had been in the habit of perusing the rules and regulations of that dangerous combination. A distinction has been made between committees transacting the mere pecuniary concerns of their corps, and committees meddling in the duties and powers belonging naturally to the commanding officer; and, it was asserted by Mr. Hiley Addington, in reply to Mr. Windham, that the committee of which he had spoken, was a "*solitary instance.*" I have, since that time, mentioned several other corps governed by such committees; and, in the last sheet of the preceding volume, I gave a full account of the composition and powers of a committee, to which the Lord Chancellor belongs. If we could obtain security, that the distinction between committees having none but pecuniary powers and committees of another sort would be practically preserved, there would certainly be *less* objection to the committees, though it would still be too great to be overcome; for, whoever has the pay of a corps at his disposal will, especially in difficult and dangerous times, soon have the corps itself at his command. But, there can be no such security as is here spoken of; there is no ground for believing, that the distinction is, or ever can be real and that every committee, whatever be its ostensible object, however modest its title or pretensions, does not, and will not, as long as it is permitted to exist, in any shape whatever, meddle, either directly or indirectly, in *all* the affairs of the corps, whether civil or military. It will be readily conceived, that I myself cannot very easily come at authentic documents, whereby to *prove* the correctness of statements of this sort; yet, I have now before me several such documents, from which I shall select two: to wit; sets of resolutions made and published by the committees of the Bristol, and of the 9th regiment of London, volunteers. The former is as follows:—"The "*committee* of the Royal Bristol volunteer "regiment of infantry, anxious to promote "the welfare and good character of the "corps, and impressed with the absolute "necessity of every individual being thoroughly acquainted with the duties of the "several stations in which the voice of his brothers in arms may have called him, have, "with the sanction of the field officers, passed "the subjoined regulations.—The *committee* "trust that the regiment will see, that they "can have no motive in *proposing these* "*rules*, but a wish to render their fellow "soldiers valuable to their country, and to "enable them effectually to second the regular military in struggling for those "rights, which have ever been the pride of "Englishmen, and which we have pledged "our honours to preserve sacred and inviolate.——They are sorry to notice, that

" several gentlemen are deficient in the " knowledge of the manual exercise, which " can oly arise from their frequent absence " from parade. They beg leave, however, " to remind them, that this is a very serious " evil, as it not only occasion delays and " inconvenience on ordinary drills and field " days, but would, in the hour of trial, ren- " der them more dangerous to their com- " rades than formidable to the enemy. The " best remedy for this will be, in the first " instance, private instruction at their seve- " ral houses, and afterwards collectively, " with as many as the corps, as can conve- " niently attend to form a party for that " purpose.—First: the *committee having re- " commended to the field officers* of the regi- " ment, the propriety of having the com- " missioned and non-commissioned officers " either publicly or privately drilled by the " adjutant and serjeant-major. Colonel " Baillie and the field officers, who were " present, requested the chairman to signify " their approbation of the above recommen- " dation; and, in consequence, *it was re- " solved*, that such drills be immediately in- " stituted twice every week, till, by a tho- " rough knowledge of their duty, their fur- " ther attendance may be dispensed with; " the former, under fine of five shillings " for each non-attendance, and the latter " two and sixpence.—— Secondly, that the " rule against laughing or talking in the " ranks be strictly attended to; and the " gentlemen in the ranks are particularly " requested to be aiding and assisting their " officers by reporting the transgressors, the " fines for which, the officers will receive " on the spot; and the non-commissioned " officers are to be particularly watchful " for the suppression of such unsoldier-like " conduct, the bane of all discipline.—— " Thirdly, that any soldier, whose ramrod " remains in the barrel upon bringing his " musket to the recover, preparatory to " firing, while on duty, or shall have ac- " tually fired it off, shall be subject to be " *reprimanded by the committee*, and pay " such fine to the regimental fund as *they* " shall think proper to enforce, not exceed- " ing the sum of five guineas.—And, as " very serious consequences have lately en- " sued, in other parts of the kingdom, from " two cartridges having been discharged at " once. It is *resolved*, that any gentleman, " who shall load his musket with more than " one cartridge, and not fall into the rear, " to draw the same, shall be subject to such " fine as *the committee shall direct*, the sum " not exceeding three guineas.—Fourthly, " that from the extreme difficulty of ascer- " taining the fines of absentees from parade, " *it is resolved*, that no verbal excuse for " non-attendance be sufficient; and those " gentlemen, who might be obliged to ab- " sent themselves will signify such by letter, " which they will cause to be delivered to " their commanding officer, before the con- " clusion of the roll-calling of their respec- " tive companies, which letters, the com- " manding officers of companies are request- " ed to file, in order that they may be pro- " duced every month, or oftener if required, " with the account of the fines returned by " the serjeants.—And, as several gentlemen " have experienced great inconvenience " from the non-attendance of others, who " have been warned for guard, *the com- " mittee*, for the better regulation of their " attendance in future, *have resolved*, that " any member of this corps, who may re- " ceive such notice, and not comply there- " with, shall be regularly warned for each " succeeding guard, and be liable to the ac- " customed fine for each default, until his " guard be completed; the only excuse, in " this case, will be such sickness as would " incapacitate him from doing his duty, of " which a certificate from a medical gen- " tleman shall be delivered to the com- " manding officer of his company, on the " morning preceding the day for which he " is warned, and no verbal excuse will be " admitted; but it is, however, clearly un- " derstood, that every gentleman has the " power of exchanging guard, which will " exempt him from the above regulation.— " Fifthly; as in a soldier the crime of " drunkenness, sleeping upon, or quitting " his post when on guard, are evils of the " greatest magnitude, the field officers, un- " der the conviction that any individual, who " may be guilty of any of these crimes, is " unworthy a post in the regiment, *have re- " solved*, that such person shall be brought " before *the committee, who shall have the " power to inquire into such conduct*, and if " it shall appear that there is a cause for " a court martial, that part of the Act of " the 43d of his present Majesty, shall " be most strictly carried into effect.—— " (Signed) HENRY SMITH, Chairman;" and dated, "Committee-room, 13th Dec. " 1803."—— Here we see, that the committee is every thing, and the Commanding Officer nothing. The committee do, indeed, recommend to the Field Officers; but, as Goldsmith says, the recommendations of superiors savour strongly of commands; and, we observe, accordingly, that the committee "*resolve*" that their *recommendations* shall be acted upon. They resolve,

that the men shall be present; that they shall be drilled, and where they shall be drilled, and how they shall be drilled, and how they shall be punished, if it appears *to them*, the committee, that punishment ought to be inflicted. In short, the regiment is under no other control than that of a club; a self-created, self-willed club; a club, composed, I dare say, of very good, very loyal, and very zealous men; their resolutions evince the strongest zeal; but, a club unknown to the law, arising, as was before stated, out of the nature of the volunteer system, but a club which may, especially when it comes to be otherwise composed, become an engine of destruction.——The other document, which I have alluded to, is in the following words.—"At a meeting "of the *military committee* of the 9th regi- "ment of Loyal London Volunteers, held "at Fishmonger's Hall, on the 5th of Ja- "nuary, 1804. Lieutenant Colonel Han- "key in the chair. RESOLVED: That "this committee are decidedly of opinion, "that the attendance required of any mem- "ber of the 9th regiment, is not more than "can be afforded by every one, without "interfering with business, so as to pro- "duce the smallest inconvenience; more "particularly when the means of obtaining "exemption, for any person under peculiar "pressure of circumstances, are taken into "consideration. They feel it, therefore, "their duty, to confirm the regulations for- "merly adopted; and to assure the Com- "manding Officer, that they will *support the* "*collection of the fines*; in which they are con- "fident he will be assisted by every *well-* "*disposed* person of the regiment.—They "trust, that no member would be so for- "getful of his duty, and so inattentive to "the credit of the regiment, as to require "a public exposure; yet, as they are con- "fident, that the more the regulations are "considered, the more their moderation "will be apparent; they do not hesitate "*to recommend*, that every power should be "used to enforce the collection of such "fines as have been, or may be incurred. "—They beg to point out to the Com- "manding Officer, that there are still se- "veral members, who, having enrolled "themselves as volunteers, *have not yet ap-* "*peared at any muster of the corps*;—that it "would now be rather a detriment to the "regiment than a benefit, that they should "join. They submit it to his considera- "tion, that some measures should be taken, "which shall either compel them to quality "for their duty; or that they should be "dismissed from the regiment, in such "manner as may appear most proper to "him. It may, however, be fairly stated, "that they are by no means exempt from "blame, for not having fulfilled their en- "gagements, neither can they expect to "be so considered.——That the Commit- "tee are of opinion, that the money to "arise from the collection of the fines, "should be applied in the formation of a "fund for aiding and assisting such mem- "bers, or the families of such members of "the regiment, as may from time to time, "by unforeseen accident, or by illness, be "brought into a situation to have occasion "for such assistance. That the adminis- "tration of this fund shall be in *a secret* "*Committee* of the Field Officers, and four per- "sons from the different wards, all of whom "are enjoined secrecy, as to any applica- "tion which may be made to them; so that "every deserving man, or his family, may "receive assistance, without any further "exposure than such as is absolutely ne- "cessary for the examination of the claim. "—That this *secret* Committee consist, in "addition to the Field Officers, of Mr. "Stringer, Monument-yard, Mr. Jones, "Fish Street Hill, Mr. W. C. Knowlys, "Mincing Lane, Mr. Joseph Reynolds, "Idol Lane."——Thus, after sub-committees, ordinary committees, grand committees, and open committees, out comes a *secret* committee! Was there ever such confusion? Such a mixture of the ludicrous and the dreadful?

When men meet in committees, or other bodies, for the purpose of deliberation and debate, it is in vain to attempt to set limits to their discussions: they will deliberate on any thing, and on every thing, in which they are, or imagine they are, interested. We have seen enough of what they can do in their corps; and, we shall, I fear, ere long, see with what facility the committees, or other deliberative bodies, of different corps, can communicate and co-operate with each other. We have, indeed, already seen a meeting convened, by public advertisement, consisting of *Delegates* from several volunteer corps, in and round the metropolis. The object of this meeting was, to provide a fund in aid of the families of such volunteers as might be injured by accidents happening while at exercise; an object not only perfectly harmless but laudable in itself: but, if the volunteer-committee-men could thus affiliate for one purpose, so they could for another; if to raise a fund for one object, so to raise a fund for another object; and, if to raise a fund, so they could to address the king to remove his

generals, or his ministers, or to make peace, or, in short, to do any other thing, which they might wish to have done. Are we told, that they could do this, whether there were any volunteer corps, or not? The answer is, that the volunteer corps establishment has virtually repealed the seditious meeting act; and, let it never be forgotten, that bodies of men, whom the government might laugh at, as long as they remained unarmed, become formidable the instant that arms are put into their hands. The truth of this observation will be questioned by no one, who has perceived the manner, in which his Majesty's ministers have, during the present session of parliament, spoken of the volunteer-corps. Measures were proposed for rendering the corps more efficient, and for preventing the dangers to be apprehended from the committees and other parts of the system. What was their reply? Not that the measures were unwise, not that they were unjust, or inexpedient, but, that their adoption might "give offence to the "*gentlemen* of the volunteer corps!" The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the King's Prime Minister, said he wished to "consult "the *feelings* of those gentlemen," and was "afraid of straining the string too tight!" The natural consequence has followed: the volunteers have grown bold; I mean the thoughtless and insolent amongst them; and we have already seen writers, under the name of *volunteers*, taking liberties, which, under any other character they never would have thought of taking, and if they had, cause for repentance would have speedily followed. One of them has publicly called upon his "brothers in arms," in no very unintelligible way, to take *vengeance* on a Member of Parliament for having disapproved of their institution, and particularly for having objected to it on account of its democratical and revolutionary tendency. We have also seen a writer of the same description, asking, whether the volunteers "would *suffer*" such and such persons to be ministers! It will, perhaps, be said, that these insolent writers are not real volunteers, a name which has been assumed merely to answer a purpose. It may be so; but what was the purpose to be answered? Evidently to give weight to the thing written, and to *intimidate* the persons written against; and this is, the very circumstance that establishes my position, to wit, that the volunteers are already become formidable to the state, without their wishing so to be, and even without their being at all conscious of the fact. What, let me ask, would be said of writings like those which I have mentioned, if appearing under the signature of *a soldier of the regular army?* If a writer under such a signature were to recommend to his comrades to take *vengeance* on Mr. Sheridan, for instance, for having spoken and written slightingly of the army, or were to notify that the army would not *suffer* such or such persons to be ministers, will it be believed, that any newspaper editor would venture to print his production? And, if it were to be printed, would not the printer and all the parties concerned be most severely punished? Why this difference, then? Why does nobody dare even to talk of punishing the seditious and sanguinary publications that come forth under the signature of a *volunteer?* What but the terror, which that name has already inspired, can have produced this glaring partiality? What is a regular soldier more than a man armed with a firelock and a bayonet? And is not a volunteer the same? Why should the latter, then, be indulged in the use of menacing language more than the former? Why are not sentiments delivered by the latter as criminal in themselves and as dangerous in their tendency as the same sentiments delivered by the former? The truth is, disguise it how we may, the shameful truth is, that this difference of feeling towards the volunteers and towards the regulars, arises, not from any jealousy that is entertained of the latter, but from the fear, which both the people and the government, but particularly the government, begin to entertain of the former; who, by the means of their subscriptions, their handbills, their advertisements, their paragraphs, their speeches, and their letters, but, above all, by their Meetings and Committees, are, without intending or perceiving it, fast growing into a new order in the state. They are, in fact, as I have before described them, a *new power*; a power unknown to the laws of England, and much too strong to be governed by those laws.

In order to hush forebodings like these, we are sometimes reminded, that in, and at, and about these Committees and Meetings, and at the *head* of all the corps, are the nobility and gentry of the country. But, the Committees are constantly changing their members; and whoever gives himself time to reflect on the motives, by which the parties are influenced, will readily allow, that, at every remove, the body, be it great or small, will receive a fresh infusion of the spirit of democracy. What power the nobleman or gentleman has in the capacity of *commander* we have already seen; and, we

may rest assured, that, if he happens to get into a committee, disgust will soon make him give way to a rival who has less to lose and more to win. But, why need we labour by reasoning to establish facts, if the demonstration lies before us? From every part of the country have we proof upon proof, that the authority of the officers, and of all those whom the government seems to regard as the *leaders* of the volunteers, is a perfect nullity, except where it happens not to thwart the wishes of those over whom it was intended, and was, for some time, thought to be exercised. I shall content myself with a few of these proofs; but, they shall be such as to produce perfect conviction.—A corps in the city of London has, within these few days, appealed from their officers to the inspector, who, like the ministers that he serves, took a middle course, decided in favour of neither, but fixed on a regulation contrary to the wishes of both. The officers yielded to his decision, but a great portion of the men resigned.—At a town not far from London, the volunteer corps mutinied for their pay, which they insisted upon having before they proceeded with their exercise, and the pay was obliged to be produced upon the spot, to the dread of the town, and to the regular army a terrible example!—The late occurrence in Mr. Colonel Tierney's Southwark corps shall be related in the whining accents of his own paper, the Morning Post, of the 12th inst as thus:—"A very unpleasant occurrence, we are sorry to state, has lately taken place in the Southwark corps of volunteers. One of the captains having, on account of his private concerns, been under the necessity of resigning his commission, the company to which he had belonged *proceeded to the election of a successor*, and sent to the colonel the name of the gentleman of whom they had made choice. Colonel Tierney immediately informed them that their proceedings were irregular, and that he had himself appointed a captain to the vacant company. This answer produced *a serious remonstrance* on the part of the privates; the consequence of which was, that the colonel ordered the company *to be disbanded*; and the members have accordingly *resigned their arms* into the hands of the proper officer." So! the colonel (or "the *gallant* colonel," as they would say in the House of Commons), the colonel has lost one of his companies; and there is a gap in his regiment! In *one* of his regiments I should say, for, strange as it may seem, he is actually, at one and the same time, colonel of *two* regiments! This double colonelcy is another of the outrages which this system has committed on common sense. And why should not colonel Tierney's men elect their new captain? Because such election was irregular, and because the colonel himself was the proper person to appoint, and the only person who was lawfully authorized to appoint, a successor to the resigned captain. This is true; but why was it not acted upon at first? Why were the men permitted to elect their officers before? Why did "the gallant colonel" himself accept of the commission, which was conferred on him, in consequence of their having elected him? "Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." If he had no objection to this mode of appointing officers before, why has he such objection to it now? Has he not always taught his citizen-soldiers to regard their elective voice as a thing of inestimable value? And does he think, that, like himself and Lord Portsmouth's punch, they are to become dumb, merely because they have changed their situations?—In Wales and its neighbourhood the system seems to have been remarkably productive of interesting events. Mr. Ashton Smith having been *chosen* Lieutenant-Colonel by the Caernarvon volunteers, instead of Sir Robert Williams, as the Lord-Lieutenant wished and expected, and other gentlemen, supposed also not to be agreeable to him, having been chosen by the corps as officers, the Lord-Lieutenant attempted to reduce their numbers, but a general cry of "*one* and *all*,"—"as we *were*, or as we *are*," decided the point!—The Bangor volunteers, in "an *open committee of the whole corps*," came to a determination, that they would no longer serve under their officers, though of *their own electing*, who were, in consequence, put aside, and others were chosen in their stead. At the same time, this corps, by a *vote*, attached itself to the Caernarvon corps, though the towns are at nine or ten miles distance from each other!—I will mention but two more instances, the first of which shall be taken from amongst the corps of Mr. Pitt. At a drill of one of these corps, a very little while since, two men left the ranks, without leave. The Lieut. who commanded, bid them fall in. They did so, but one of them began laughing; whereupon the Lieut. bade him hold his tongue, to which he replied, that he would "be damned if he would unless he pleased." The Lieutenant went up to him in order to take him out of the ranks; but the man, clubbing his musket, *swore he would knock the officer down*, if he touched him. A serjeant of the guards,

who was attending the drill, then took a file of men, seized the offender, and lodged him in a store-house not far off; but, when the drill was over, the men went in a body to the store-house, and swore they would instantly pull it down, unless their comrade was released. This had its desired effect; and thus ended this instance of volunteer docility! No wonder that Mr. Pitt, if it be really true that he means to rival Buonaparté in arms, should wish for a "more efficient "code" for the government of his legions. Whether the measures which he proposed, at the opening of parliament, would be adequate to the object, the public may, probably, be able to form some judgment, when they are told, that the battalion, in which this most impudent and mutinous conduct took place, has at its head *a Field Officer from the regular service!* Who can behold all this without thinking of the effect, which it is calculated to produce on the minds of the army? And here we see the evil of dressing the volunteers in regimentals; this gives them the *appearance* of soldiers; and, when they are perceived to be disobedient, to absent themselves, to abuse their officers, and to mutiny by whole corps, what ground have we to hope, that the army will not follow their example? Yes, we have ground, and, I trust, ground that will never fail us; the excellent character, the high spirit, the true soldier-like pride of the army, that pride which must necessarily make the soldiers look with contempt on the scenes of disorder, disobedience, and confusion, which they, but too often, witness amongst the volunteers. What a lamentable state! What a melancholy reflection! That, to the zeal, the patriotism, the loyalty, to all the public virtues of the people, such a direction should have been given, as to make even themselves hope, that the army will not be injured by their example!——But, the most alarming symptom of all is, that, in several instances, particularly in the one I am now about to mention, the effects of the volunteer system has been, an *open and daring defiance of the laws and the magistracy.* At Chester, on the morning of the 28th of December, a press gang, stationed in that city, took up a seaman, who proved to belong to the *Chester Volunteer Infantry*; and, in consequence of the threats of some of the corps to rescue him, he was lodged in the Northgate jail. The volunteers, soon after, paraded for exercise, and on their parade repeated their threats of rescue, for which they were reprimanded by the commanding officer; but were, at the same time, assured, that every proper effort should be made in order to obtain the release of their comrade. In the evening of the same day, a body of the volunteers, about 400 in number, suddenly assembled, in their regimentals, and with side arms, marched immediately to the Northgate, and demanded the man, who had been lodged there by the press-gang. On receiving a refusal, they were proceeding to attack the jail, when *one* of their officers, Major Wilmot, (a gentleman *who had served long in the regulars)* came up, in his regimentals, and, after urging them in vain to desist, declared, that he would put the first of them to death that attempted to force the jail; upon which he was immediately seized by the volunteers, who *pinnioned his arms*, some of them calling out, at the same time, "down with "him!" and others "break his sword over "his head!" By the assistance of some friends, he was rescued from them unhurt. They then turned their fury against the jail, the windows of which they first forced in, and then the door; upon which the jailor, in order to secure the rest of the prisoners, gave up the man in question, who, by his rescuers was *chaired* through all the principal streets of the city, amidst shouts of exultation and triumph! The naval rendezvous house was the next object of attack. At their approach the press-gang retired; but, leaving their *colours*, the volunteers tore them from their staff, and *dragged them in the kennel*, after having destroyed the windows, doors, &c. of the house! Lieutenant Colonel Cuyler, the Inspecting Field Officer of the volunteers in the district, sent to and called upon, the mayor and magistrates to use *their* authority; but, what were they to do against such a number of armed men? All they could do, was what they did, to wit, to send a very civil note to Lieutenant Burchell, earnestly requesting him to take his gang out of Chester, as it was not in the power of the magistrates to afford them protection against the volunteers, 'till troops should arrive in the city. The magistrates, at the same time, sent off an express to His Royal Highness Prince William of Gloucester, who commands the district, stating that the *safety of the city* could not be answered for, unless he sent a strong detachment of troops; in consequence of which application, four companies of the Shropshire Supplementary Militia were immediately marched in from Liverpool, and, at the end of some days, *peace was restored.*——And, is it already come to this? Is this the sort of force which is to enable us "to hurl back the threats of "the enemy?" Are these the troops, whose gay and lofty plumes, in Hyde Park, so

completely eclipsed the poor regular army and the militia? Are these the heroes, who received the thanks of the House of Commons? Are these the Knights whose banners are wrought by the hands of Royal ladies, and presented by Majesty itself?

Nothing, that we hear of, has yet been done to the Chester volunteers; and, indeed, so timid, so fearful, are the public, as well as the government, as to all matters, wherein the volunteers are concerned, that no mention of this alarming transaction has even found its way into the London prints, which, had such an act of violence, such a daring outrage on the laws of the land, been committed by a regular regiment, would have stunned the nation with their out-cries, with their demands of justice upon the heads of the offenders *. I shall not attempt here to point out all the consequences, which are likely to result from the example of successful opposition to the law, set by the Chester volunteers, but I cannot refrain from expressing my fears, that, as the news of it shall reach the several seaports, particularly the collier towns, the volunteer corps will become very convenient asylums for all those seamen, who happen to be in port, and who wish to have an infallible protection against press-warrants; so that, the volunteer system, the intention of which was to increase the force of the country in a degree far beyond what it could have been made to amount to by any other means, this ill-contrived, worse-digested, and still worse-conducted system, will, after having starved the militia, the army of reserve and the regulars, extend its impoverishing and enervating influence to the *fleet*, and that, too, at a moment, when every possible exertion is wanted to provide for the demands of that most important branch of our defence. But, the great danger, the danger, which, in my opinion, swallows up every other, is, the triumph, which I think, and which I tremble to think, the volunteer-corps, will, if not speedily reduced in numbers, and if the system be not radically revised, obtain over all the legal authority in the state. If I am told, that the King's ministers are, by the Act of Parliament, empowered to disband any volunteer-corps thus misbehaving, I ask, dare they, and will they, exercise this power? If not, it is worse than no power at all, because their forbearing to use it, under such circumstances, discovers the extent of their fears. Am I reminded, that men, by becoming volunteers, obtain no exemption from the effects of the law? My answer is, show me what has been done to the volunteers who broke open the jail at Chester; who demolished a house, dragged the King's colours in the kennel, and who rescued a man from the King's officers and the King's prison; show me what has been done to those volunteers; show me, that they have been dealt with as men not being volunteers would have been dealt with, in a similar case, or blame me not for regarding the Northgate of Chester as another *Bastile*, and blame me not, if my anxiety for my King and country makes me fear, that, if the ministry yield to the volunteers in this instance, the historian, after describing the riot and rescue at Chester, will have to add, 'here the revolution of England began.'

"Short follies are best," was the title of an appeal to the French government and people, in an early stage of those mad proceedings, which, contrary to the expectations and in opposition to the wishes of even those who were concerned in them, finally demolished the monarchy and deluged the country with blood. *Here*, too, "short "follies are best." The volunteer system is not made for this country: it is fraught with mischief: it must be done away, or radically changed: the preservation of our Sovereign's throne and of our own liberties depends upon measures being speedily adopted for this purpose. There is *yet* time; but, how long that time will last, no man can tell.

WM. COBBETT.

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* It is truly astonishing how carefully facts relative to volunteer quarrels are kept from the public. There has been, for weeks past, a most violent dispute going on in the St. Pancras regiment. Yet the very first we see of it in print, appears this very day, in the following words: "We feel "pleasure in being able to state, that the *existing* "*differences* between the *Colonel* and *Committee* of the "St. Pancras regiment of Loyal Volunteers are "likely to be amicably adjusted."—Mark this. Here is the *Committee* at work again. Yet Mr. Hiley Addington asserted, that the corps mentioned by Mr. Windham, was a "*solitary* instance!"—See Mr. Windham's admirable Speech, at full length, on the subject of Volunteer Committees, in the 6th Number of Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, which is just published.

TO THE EDITOR.

[In inserting the following letter, which, it seems, has already been published in another print, I think it proper to observe, that I coincide with the author, in all the sentiments, which he has here expressed. I have always disapproved of "the Society for the "Suppression of Vice," which is, in fact, an

inquisition self created and totally unknown to the laws and usages of the realm. I see the names of many respectable persons amongst the members and supporters of this club; but, I am fully persuaded, that the foundation of it is puritanical, and I am sure, that, in its consequences, it is fraught with mischief. Nevertheless, I am sincerely disposed to hear, and to communicate to my readers, all that can be urged in behalf of this novel institution; and, therefore, I invite a defence of it, which, if not much more than twice as long as the letter here inserted, and coming to me from *a member* of the society, shall appear as soon as possible after it is received ——W. C.]

SIR,—In reading the papers I frequently observe, among the proceedings of the Police Offices, accounts of prosecutions instituted by persons styling themselves a Society for the Suppression of Vice. A Society for the Suppression of Vice has a captivating sound, and I have no doubt that the members of it (of whom I do not know one individual) are decent, virtuous characters, who, with the honest matron in Prior's tale,

> Think the nation ne'er will thrive
> Till all the whores are burnt alive.

Readily admitting, therefore, that the members of the Society for the Suppression of Vice are neither whoremongers, adulterers, nor even such as the publican whom they lately brought to Bow Street, I beg leave to say, that I entertain great doubts of the utility of such a society. I am very much afraid that it either has begun, or will end, in that sort of spiritual pride which so often has compelled men charitably to persecute their neighbours for not being so pious and so godly as themselves. It is wonderful, Sir, how the love of power disguises itself. Those who by hook or crook can contrive to make others do what they otherwise would not do, or forbear to do what they otherwise would do, immediately feel themselves elevated into an important character. The beadle of a parish is a most arbitrary sovereign among beggars and other paltry delinquents within his jurisdiction. When I first heard of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, I thought that it had been a new sort of magistracy erected in the state, a sort of commission for executing the office of grand beadle all over England. The runners and agents of this society disperse themselves every where, scour all streets, inspect the ale-houses, detect dancers (hops among the low, routs among the high), carry on eternal hostility with kinds of amusement in which the inferior ranks of society are so insolent as to indulge. Far be it from me to justify vice, either high or low, but I am inclined to think that the law itself goes out of its province if it attempts to regulate the private lives of the subject, and to punish men for what are commonly called vice. I am sure, at least, that if an inquisition of law were to be instituted to make every man chaste, sober and godly, I know not in what horrible tyranny it would end. If this Society for the Suppression of Vice go on, they will give the laws that do exist in these points an extension, and a force which it never was intended they should have, and which must give rise to intolerable vexation. A man dare not take a pint of porter on a Sunday, but straight the publican is carried to Bow Street, by some miscreant in the pay of the society. I say nothing of the private life of individuals being at the mercy of such conservators of public morals. Not long ago, in consequence of the officious and pertinacious meddling of this society, the character (the vice it may be said) of a gentleman was nearly exposed to the whole town, in a foolish investigation about the stealing of a child. I protest that, had I been in that gentleman's situation, I should have cudgelled my tormentor, could I have singled him out, in a most exemplary manner, for his impertinence.——But there is another view in which this society may do much mischief, while I am satisfied that they never can do any good. They, in fact, keep a seminary for rearing up a set of the most abandoned scoundrels that can infest society, namely, informers by trade. It is impossible that any but the most idle, dissolute, and shameless, can engage in the occupation of common informers, and of discovering the game which the society are determined to hunt down. These vagabonds, protected by the authority of this puritanical institution, have it in their power to give trouble to many persons to whom they have ill-will, and who sometimes would rather pay a good sum of money, than have their vices exposed. Besides, these informers will either make or find business for themselves and for their employers. They will swear any thing against any body. Why, it is their vocation, and who can blame them. But those who establish and support such a trade in the state have not a little to answer for. While such villains are thus regimented and paid, whose life may be safe? whose will may be

lid? whose honour may be sacred? whose omestic peace may be secure? This is doag a great deal of evil, and pray where is he good that is to follow?——All wise egislators have abstained from attempting orcibly to prosecute manners, when they do ot shew themselves in overt acts destructive to the peace and order of the community. There are many things bad in themelves, and criminal in *foro conscientiæ*, of which a human tribunal can take no cogizance. These things are of the resort not of civil laws but of religion, and to call n the civil arm to correct them, would multiply the business of police so much, and call for the interference of government so often, that society would be intolerable, and all distinction between vices and crimes would be lost.——I have little doubt that this society originates in the principles of Hudibras and Ralpho. Whether it be a bear and fiddle, or any vulgar merry-making, some people see in it ten thousand imaginary dangers to religion and virtue, and would use the old ponderous argument of force to suppress it. I do not say that this society is one of the engines of the puritanical, methodistical party, now so much on the increase, to get power among us, though I am not without suspicion. They, in the opinion of many grave men, have made considerable advances to an *imperium in imperio*, and if they go on prospering as they have done, it will be a good thing to enjoy their protection against their own agent, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, or indeed for any person whatever. This indirect way of governing is well calculated to gain converts and subjects; and it may lead to public usurpation, or at least to a confederation inconsistent with all good government. The exercise of such a function, cloaked over with the pretence of zeal for religion and godliness, is highly gratifying to the mind.

> Sure 'tis an orthodox opinion,
> That grace is founded in dominion,
> Great piety consists in pride,
> To rule is to be sanctified!

I am perfectly satisfied, therefore, that an institution like that of the Society for the Prosecution of Vice is a standing conspiracy against the quiet and tranquillity of society; that it may be a very dangerous engine in the hands of the Puritans, to subdue and pervert the lower orders, and ought to be discouraged by all wise and liberal men. Magistrates have it in their power to do much, by setting themselves against all informations produced by the perjured agents of the society. In doing so they will do their duty to the state.——I am yours, &c.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,——The state of the commerce of the country is a subject, to which the public and the parliament ought to be directed, particularly as the Minister has, by his actions, shewn so little regard for the preservation of that "capital, credit and confi- "dence," which, at the date of the peace of Amiens, he thought proper to represent as the triple pillar of our safety.——He has, Sir, refused the loan of Exchequer Bills, requested by the merchants of Liverpool. He has turned a deaf ear to all their representations, as well as to those that have been made to him by the Merchants of London, Bristol, Glasgow, and Newcastle, though the persons who joined in these representations were numerous, and of the most wealthy and respectable class, and who, for the most part, not being themselves in want of assistance, could only be influenced by a conviction of the necessity and urgency of the case, and by the desire of assisting the commercial interest at large at this most critical period. ——In the year 1793, events had occurred which threatened to produce effects as disastrous as are now anticipated; when on a representation being made to Mr. Pitt, he, with that manliness which characterized all *his* proceedings, brought forward the measure of a Loan to the Merchants (though it was opposed by some persons of eminence in the city), regardless of the censure of the envious and the dissuasion of the ignorant. The result was, as was generally the result when that great Minister acted from himself, that he had the satisfaction of finding, he had conferred a most essential service on the kingdom at large, by supporting the credit of the merchants, and promoting our manufactures, and this too with a gain to the Treasury; for although he saved many worthy families from ruin, and although the Exchequer was not in the actual advance of a single shilling, yet there was a profit derived by government, from the issue of Exchequer bills, of several thousand pounds.——Whether Mr. Addington refuses to adopt a similar plan, in a case of similar, not to say greater emergency, that he may as much as possible deviate from the steps of his great predecessor—whether he is apprehensive of provoking a discussion of the causes which have conduced to the present and increasing embarrassment of the merchants—or, whether, by way of experiment, he prefers to meet the storm rather than prevent it—whether he is deterred by the insinu-

ations of the ill-informed or ill-intentioned advisers—or by what other motive he is influenced—certain it is, that he has peremptorily rejected every solicitation, and turned a deaf ear to the strong, repeated, and united remonstrances that have been made. It therefore now only remains to wait the event, which I venture to predict will be as speedy as it will be calamitous to this nation, and will afford to the enemy far greater cause of exultation than (if the spirit of the country be not depressed by the apathy or inefficiency of his Majesty's Ministers) they will ever derive from the success of their arms. I say so in a *commercial*, therefore in a *financial* view, of this most serious and impending blow to our real interests as a military and a trading nation. As a sincere friend to my country, I warn the Minister of the calamitous result. If our commerce fail, our manufactures must of course fail, and it requires no powers of divination to affirm, that the failure of our revenue must be the fatal consequence. The Minister, therefore, is to judge, whether, at such an awful crisis, he ought to allow personal pique or pompous pride to supercede measures evidently calculated for the particular benefit, if not the salvation, of the state.——I am, Sir, your's, &c. * R. N.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,——Having observed that the Lords of the Admiralty, have thought proper to advise his Majesty to put several officers of the royal Marines on the retired list, which without doubt their age and length of service fully entitled them to, I so far intirely approve of what they have done, as younger officers will be brought forward, who will be more capable of discharging the duties of their profession, with satisfaction to their own minds, and advantage to their country.——But, I sincerely hope, their lordships do not intend to stop here. There is no corps under the crown, whose services have been more conspicuous, and whose utility is more generally acknowledged by the whole country, and truth calls on me to declare, that in my opinion, no one has been more neglected.——The necessity of putting the heads of the corps at present on the retirement, sufficiently shews the want of proper encouragement being held out to the officers. Many of the captains who only obtained that rank in ninety-seven, have served twenty-four years, and were no less than seventeen years subalterns. It is easy to foresee, before they can possibly be field-officer will be time for them to retire from service.——If the number of field-o were increased, in proportion to tha other corps, there might be some chan young men looking forward, to obtain rank of a field-officer, while they poss strength of body, and a sufficient en of mind, to enable them to discharge duty.——As the disadvantages the ma corps labours under are not gene known, I shall beg leave to point out a of them: in the first place, the presen tablishment is about twenty-two thou The number of field officers attache this are three colonels commandant, t colonels en second, twelve lieutenant lonels, and twelve majors. In all th ——The royal artillery, a corps tha the nearest the establishment of the rines, I believe is about nine thou strong. They are divided into nine ba lions, and have five field-officers to e In all forty-five. Such a disproportio at once astonishing; and the effect p duced by it is, that in the one corps, officers are pretty generally disgusted, lament the day they entered into it; others feel themselves happy in hav succeeded in promotion, beyond their m sanguine expectations.——Such is one the consequences, arising from a want a proper establishment of field-officers the marine. It is true a saving to gove ment arises from it; but if the spirit o corps is to be broke, and all emulat crushed, from the paltry consideration o few hundred pounds, it is high time to duce it altogether. I am astonished, tha hitherto has supported the character it so well deserved, under such numer disadvantages; a few more of which, Cobbett, I shall take the liberty to po out in a future letter.——I am, &c.

Jan. 8, 1804. R.

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* Want of room prevents me from giving *any opinion* on this subject.—EDITOR.

INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN. —— New disturbances ha broken out in Syria. When the celebrat Dgezzar Pacha was appointed Pacha of D mascus, Abdallah, who was displaced make room for him, put himself at the he of 15,000 men, and laid waste the who country with fire and sword, in order to re venge himself for the loss of his station Governor of Damascus.——The town Alexandria, in Egypt, is reduced to t greatest straits by the Beys, by whom it besieged. According to some accounts A Pacha, the Turkish Commander, has co

fined himself to the defence of the citadel, and has given up the town to the Mamelukes.——The Captain Pacha, who sailed some time ago, with a fleet of seventeen ships, for the protection of the Morea, has received orders from the Grand Seignior to return to Constantinople, and is now, with three ships of the line, in the Dardanelles. The remainder of his fleet remains off the Morea, under the Turkish Vice-Admiral.—A Consul from the United States of America has been recognized at Petersburgh, who is the first public agent sent to that court.——The Hamburgh Correspondenten asserts that it is now decided that the High Chancellor, Count Von Worenzorff, has, on account of his bad health and great age, resigned his employments, and will speedily retire to his estates. His place, however, is not yet supplied, and in the mean time Czartorinski is charged with the duties of that department.——An article dated on the banks of the Mayne states that the Emperor of Russia had applied to the French Government relative to the occupation of Hanover, and the indemnification of the King of Sardinia, but in both instances had received a negative. Buonaparté said, that he could neither evacuate Hanover nor give effect to the indemnity of the King of Sardinia, even were the principle admitted, till the present war with England was terminated.——Accounts from Petersburgh state, that the levy of recruits from the Russian army amounts to 60,000, and 14,000 for the navy. Orders are also said to have been received, to form magazines on the Polish frontiers, for the Russian troops in that quarter. The Russian fleet in the Black Sea, composed of 12 ships of the line, of 64 guns each, and nine frigates, is to be completely ready to set sail at the shortest notice, at the beginning of next spring.——Letters from Wetzlar state, that, under the mediation of France, the sum of indemnity to be allowed by the Batavian Republic to the House of Orange for the domains of that family has been fixed at two millions of Dutch ducats.——The Prince of Castel Franco, the Spanish Ambassador, and the Chevalier Miranda, the Portuguese Ambassador, have notified the neutrality of their respective nations in the present war.——It appears by letters from Vienna, that the dispute between the Courts of Vienna and Munich, on the subject of *Oberbaus*, is likely to be adjusted. The Bavarians have withdrawn from that place, and the Austrian troops that were advancing to the frontiers of Bavaria have received orders to halt. It is said, however, that the difference respecting the rights of the Equestrian Order of the Empire, whose cause had been espoused by the Emperor, against the pretensions of the Elector of Bavaria, is still the subject of negotiation; and that the Elector has appealed to the Courts of Berlin and St. Petersburgh.——Recent intelligence from the Escurial informs us, that much anxiety prevails in Spain respecting the neutrality of that kingdom. The terms of the late convention with France have not transpired, but it is feared that England may not recognize the agreement. In the mean-time, the naval preparations in the Spanish ports continue with great vigour. Admiral Gravina is now at the Court of the Escurial; and, with few exceptions, all naval officers are ordered to their ports.——Notwithstanding the numerous accounts which have been for a long time received of the wretched state of St. Domingo, and of the utter inability of the French to retain their establishments there, even for a short time, it is asserted in the Philadelphia papers, that the French Chargé d'Affaires in the United States has lately had placed in his hands, upwards of four hundred thousand dollars for the use of the remnant of the French forces in St. Domingo: and that means were to be adopted to procure a regular supply of money for defraying the expenses of the colony, and every claim on the Governor, or his agents, was to be met by sums previously placed in the hands of individuals specially appointed by the French Government.—These papers, also, confirm the news of the intention of the Spanish Government in Louisiana, to surrender the province to no other than a French Agent duly authorized for that purpose. In consequence of this, all commerce at New Orleans is suspended; and the American Government is taking the necessary measures for possessing themselves of the ceded territory, by force, if the Spaniards should persist in their refusal to surrender it.

DOMESTIC.——The London Gazette of Saturday last contains an Order in Council, prohibiting, for six months, from the 11th inst. the exportation of naval and military stores.——The Gazette of the 10th inst. announces that the King has been pleased to constitute and appoint the Right Honourable John Earl of St. Vincent, Admiral of the White Squadron of His Majesty's Fleet, Lieutenant General of the Royal Marine Forces, and Knight of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath; Sir Philip Stephens and Sir Thomas Troubridge, Baronets; James Adams, John Markham, and John Lemon, Esqrs. and Sir Harry Burrard Neale, Bart. to be His Majesty's Commissioners for executing the office of High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ire-

land, and the Dominions, Islands and Territories thereunto belonging.

MILITARY.——For a long time no accounts of the military preparations of France have been received, upon which any reliance could be placed. The late French papers are totally silent on the subject, but in the Leyden Gazette there are accounts so far down as the 16th of December, which describe the amount of the French military force as very formidable. The army of the camp of St. Omer alone is estimated at 70,000 men. An hundred thousand men are stated to be stationed along the coast from Boulogne to Ostend. Every moment new detachments of troops are setting out from the interior, as well as from the frontiers of the Rhine, to the coasts of the Channel. Seven thousand men who have been recalled from the Army of Hanover are to repair thither also. The army also which has remained hitherto in Swisserland has just received orders for the same destination. At the same time the vast number of troops collected aloug the coasts, in barracks, at a season which multiplies their wants, has considerably embarrassed their commanding officers to supply them with necessaries, and has necessarily subjected the neighbouring departments to requisitions by way of loan. But the First Consul was no sooner informed of this, than he sent orders to the Minister at War to draw up immediately exact statements of the sums raised in this way, and to give orders for their payment. The Minister of Finance has announced this resolution of the Chief Magistrate to the Prefects of the Provinces concerned, in answer to the representations made by them in the name of their constituents. The minister concludes his letter by requesting the prefects to make known this measure in the communes that had suffered from the requisition, and to assure them that those requisitions which the exigency of the service had rendered indispensably necessary, would not be repeated. ——There are no accounts of any recent movements among the French troops stationed on the coasts of Italy: they amounted, according to the last estimates, to nearly thirty-six thousand men, composed almost exclusively of French soldiers. The greatest part of the Italian conscripts have been, during the war, appointed to some other service.——The preparations which were formerly stated to have been carrying on, on the coasts of the Adriatic, do not appear to have been interrupted.

NAVAL.——No information has been received relative the naval preparations on the French coast; but intelligence respecting those in Holland, which, indeed, are said to be the principal, by an American vessel which has just arrived at Cowes, and which left the Texel on Sunday the 1st instant, when between fifty and sixty transports had gone down to the Helder, which were fitted up for the reception of horse and foot, but neither a man nor horse was embarked, and there were no provisions on board. All idea of any expedition sailing from Holland till after the winter, is given up, and a considerable part of the French troops have marched from the coast. This intelligence is confirmed by a gentleman who left Amsterdam on the 3d inst.——It is confidently reported that ministers are now meditating a grand attack upon the French armaments in Boulogne, which it is supposed cannot be effected without the loss of fifteen hundred or two thousand seamen.——Dispatches have been received from Captain Owen, of His Majesty's ship Immortalité, cruizing off Boulogne, in which he states, that, having on the night of the 3d inst. reinforced the crew of the Archer gun brig, with some men from his own ship, and pushed her in close shore, she fell in with and captured the French lugger gun-vessel, No. 432, mounting an eighteen and a twelve-pounder, commanded by an Ensign de Vaisseau, with five seamen, a lieutenant, and twenty-six grenadiers of the thirty sixth regiment of the line, some of whom, with two seamen, escaped in her boat during the running fight, which she continued for a quarter of an hour with her stern gun and musketry. The Archer had part of her rigging cut, but no one materially hurt on either side. The Archer and Griffin cutter afterwards captured a dogger, a schuyt, and two Blankenburgh fishing boats, which the prisoners report to be part of a convoy, which, with a prame of sixteen guns, and five or six gun-vessels, escaped under the land in the dark; and some of which were laden with provisions and stores. The schuyt has gin, and the fishing boats timbers and knees for boats; each vessel had three or four soldiers on board.

The VIth Number of COBBETT'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES is just published. It contains the debate in the House of Lords on the Irish Martial Law Bill; and, also, the speeches at full length of Mr. Windham, Colonel Craufurd, &c. on the Report on the Army Estimates.

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